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ABSTRACT

In 1987-88, some 150 American Indian students, parents, tribal leaders, and educators participated in seven regional dialogues on the reforms needed in American Indian education. Participants gave a clear message that Indians want direct control over educational institutions serving their children, curriculum reform to make cultural retention an important factor in their education, and tribal community empowerment to strengthen the partnership between communities and educational systems. Despite the public schools' poor record in educating Indian youth and in being insensitive to cultural and historical issues, participants wanted the American model of education reformed so as to be relevant to Indian concerns. They endorsed the College Board's six basic academic competencies as vital skills needed for success in higher education and employment, but they expressed the need for tribal communities to set their own educational agenda, based upon local needs and concerns. They agreed that schools should offer appropriate tribal language courses and bilingual and bicultural courses. They made recommendations for the integration of American Indian content and perspectives into the areas of English and language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical education and health, and computer literacy. Participants affirmed a holistic approach to education, and called for concerted action with regard to (1) biased textbook accounts of American Indians and their history; (2) poor self-image of Indian students; (3) community in-service training of educators; (4) development of holistic cultural curricula; (5) parent involvement; (6) community dialogues and involvement; and (7) college scholarships based on academic excellence. (SV)

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EDUCATIONAL EQuality PROJECT

Our Voices, Our Vision: American Indians Speak Out for Educational Excellence

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The College Board

American Indian Science & Engineering Society

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Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces: they were instructed in all your Sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods...neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing.

Chiefs of the six Nations
at Lancaster, Pennsylvania,
1744

Preface

Much has been written about school reform in America, but very little attention has been given to American Indian students. What little attention has been given to Indian communities has, for the most part, met with failure or limited success because the approval of tribal leaders and parents was not secured and Indian cultural values and agendas were not taken into consideration.

Following through on a recommendation of an earlier Native American Symposium, a series of dialogues on Native American education was initiated in 1987, sponsored jointly by the College Board's Educational EQuality Project (EQ) and the American Indian Sciences and Engineering Society (AISES). Through these dialogues, AISES and the College Board undertook to learn what educational changes American Indians want for American Indian youth. Enabled by funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and a number of other contributors, AISES proceeded to conduct seven regional dialogues with grass roots members of Indian communities. This report represents the outcomes of these meetings and the concensus of 150 Indian leaders, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students from 87 tribes. Every major geographic region in the nation was represented.

It is clear from this report that Indian people want their children to value their culture and traditions, but they also want their children to have basic academic competencies and subject-matter knowledge when they emerge from the educational pipeline. Among the critical issues for American Indians is how to reconcile Indian spiritual values and formal education.

It is our hope that this report will serve as a springboard for the development of policy changes and new program initiatives that are more effective in Indian communities, and that it will be an impetus for ongoing dialogue with Indian communities in their quest for educational excellence.

Educational EQuality Project,
The College Board

American Indian Science and
Engineering Society (AISES)

Introduction

American Indians have many educational needs that differ from those of mainstream society. Many Indians feel that the assimilation objectives of American education are detrimental to the social, economic, and political well-being of their communities. These concerns prompted the National Dialogue Project on American Indian Education. Some 150 American Indian students, parents, tribal leaders, and educators, representing numerous urban areas and nearly 87 tribes, discussed these issues in 1987 and 1988 at seven regional dialogues sponsored jointly by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the College Board's Educational EQuality Project. The message emanating from Indians through these dialogues is clear. Indians want direct control over educational institutions serving their children, curriculum reform to make cultural retention an important factor in their education, and tribal community empowerment to strengthen the partnership between communities and educational systems.

Dialogue participants cited historical and contemporary issues that make education reform imperative. Historically, white Americans invaded Indian country, established colonial institutions, and subjugated most sovereign Indian nations to federal domination. Under duress, tribes ceded most of their landholdings and lost their economic self-sufficiency through forced changes in lifestyles. Federal policy makers implemented a coercive assimilation policy aimed at destroying tribal culture. Architects of assimilation targeted Indian children for radical resocialization as a means of destroying tribal life. Traditionally, parents, clan members, and religious leaders taught children tribal values, religious precepts, political ideology, and other skills to live a well-balanced life. Under white authority, Indian children frequently suffered a torrent of abuse. Government officials sent children to distant boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their own language, taught to believe that their Indian ways were evil, and inculcated with values antithetical to tribal life.

In the 1950s, when the federal government sought to cancel its trust obligation to Indian tribes, federal budget cuts shifted emphasis from boarding schools to local public schools. Although most Indian students thereafter lived at home and attended local schools, the aim of state-administered education remained essentially the same: assimilation. Non-Indian educators frequently lacked the sensitivity to deal with Indian students in a productive manner. As public opinion became more tolerant of cultural pluralism during the 1960s, Congress authorized funds for Indian education and cultural retention programs. Numerous tribes and communities took advantage of the opportunity by contracting with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools, establishing local school boards, and setting up alternative schools. With this control, Indians began to develop culturally based curricula. Federal

budget cuts during the late 1970s and 1980s, however, eliminated or weakened many of these self-determination initiatives in education.

Social, economic, and political problems facing Indian communities today are largely attributed to the disruptive impact of westward American expansion and federal Indian policy. Interracial contact has weakened but not destroyed Indian culture. Pressure to assimilate, interaction with non-Indians, outward migration, and education have impacted tribal communities unevenly. While many Indians have attempted to integrate into the mainstream, others have done so selectively or not at all. While fluency in tribal language has declined in some tribes, it remains firmly entrenched in others. Lifestyle spirituality continues to underpin tribal life.

The legacy of inconsistent and historically conflicting public policies toward Indian people is evident in tribal communities. Teenage pregnancies in many communities exceed national levels. Alcoholism and substance abuse is at epidemic levels in Indian country. Soaring unemployment on reservations makes migration to cities an attractive alternative to poverty for many young families. According to the 1980 census, over half of the nation's 1.4 million Indians live in urban areas. Other problems plaguing Indian people include negative self-concepts and suicide.

Schools administered by non-Indians are often not addressing these issues. Moreover, they fail to educate a large portion of the Indian community. In 1980 the Indian drop-out rate was 45 percent. According to a 1988 BIA status report, 90 percent of all Indians attend public schools; the remainder attend BIA and private schools. Family illiteracy keeps Indian youth from mastering basic educational skills. The mainstream orientation of school curricula disorients many Indian students rooted in traditional culture. Because most teachers are non-Indian, school districts do not provide Indian students with positive role models, nor have they developed effective teaching strategies based upon the learning styles of Indian children.

Despite this abysmal record, dialogue participants wanted the American model of education reformed so as to be relevant to Indian concerns. They endorsed EQ's six Basic Academic Competencies (described in *Academic Preparation for College*, College Entrance Examination Board, 1983) as vital skills needed for success in higher education and employment, but they expressed the need for tribal communities to set their own educational agenda, based upon local needs and concerns.

Drawing upon their impressive knowledge of Indian culture, history, and contemporary status, the participants presented positive formulations for revitalizing Indian life. They affirmed that Indians, whether in reservation or urban settings, must act to remedy many of the social, economic, and political ills plaguing their communities. They wanted curricula to include Indian languages, world views, culture, concepts, values, and perspectives. They articulated the need for schools to offer course work designed to reinforce parental and community teachings. They asserted that children instilled with traditional tribal values could live successfully in the modern world.

The dialogue participants saw little hope of resolving problems affecting their communities without substantial change in the educational status quo. They insisted upon the need for sweeping changes in education. With nearly 50 percent of the Indian population under the age of nineteen, they saw change as essential.

Integrating Indian Culture into Basic Academic Competencies and Subjects

Making education relevant to tribal community needs is possible. Dialogue participants agreed that schools must begin to integrate Indian culture into the Basic Academic Competencies as well as subject-matter areas, and to develop appropriate bilingual/bicultural course offerings. They saw close interaction between Indian communities and local schools as a prerequisite to success for Indian students. Indian parents and community leaders must work cooperatively with local educators by sharing their knowledge of tribal culture, philosophy, and history. This approach would provide Indian students with positive reinforcement that the educational process is important for tribal communities.

Going to school and getting an education are two different things and they do not always happen at the same time.

Dr. Rosa M. Hill, Mohawk, 1930

The following areas of Basic Academic Competencies and subjects should be reoriented to include Indian content and perspectives whenever possible.

English and Language Arts—English is vital to communication in most American settings. Dialogue participants critically analyzed institutional mechanisms that are the official conduit for communication. They suggested culturally appropriate ways in which American Indian students can master English skills effectively. To this end, dialogue participants endorsed the concept of building on basic skills by encouraging schools to create settings where Indian students can speak, read, and write about their own cultural experiences. Participants strongly endorsed using American Indian creation stories in literature and in poetry as a means of building reading and literature appreciation. American Indian poets and authors can be drawn upon to deepen literacy as well as to enhance self-esteem.

Mathematics—Mathematics is a critical academic discipline for the Indian community to master. Schools should stress a strong mathematics program, including algebra, geometry, functions, and calculus, from kindergarten to the college level. If Indian youth are going to have math-based careers, early preparation is imperative. Basic algebra should be a high school graduation requirement for all Indian children. The mathematics curriculum should include practical applications to "real world" situations and should prepare students for standardized tests. Success in mathematics will enhance the academic self-esteem of Indian students and prepare them for a technological society.

"Most students leave school without sufficient preparation in mathematics to cope with either on-the-job demands for problem-solving or with college requirements for mathematic literacy" (National Resource Council, 1989). Many career opportunities are denied because Indian students are not prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

Dialogue participants discussed the ancient tradition of mathematical genius among indigenous peoples. Their contributions to mathematics and science, such as the medicine wheel and the Aztec calendar, should be incorporated into the historical dimension of modern curriculum offerings. If properly prepared for leadership in math-based fields, American Indians can once again contribute significantly to the technological, economic, and social advancement of native peoples as well as to the society at large.

Science—Biology, chemistry, physics, and other science courses can be made culturally relevant for tribal youth by integrating Indian concepts of natural phenomena, astronomy, medicine, and mythology into the curriculum. For example, teaching the Mother Earth tradition, the notion that all things on earth are sacred and interrelated, would heighten students' awareness of conservation and the interdependence of nature. In light of such dangers as the greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, and the ruthless exploitation of the earth's resources, this spiritual message of living in harmony with nature has cross-cultural significance.

Social Studies—Social studies courses frequently sideline, stereotype, and debase Indian culture. Dialogue participants agreed that textbooks, such as those for history and anthropology, commonly present either romantic or negative images of Indians. This propaganda has etched into the American mind that Indians represent human savagery, while Anglos symbolize superiority. On the other hand, the curriculum pays scant attention to contemporary Indian issues, such as tribal sovereignty, economic development, and culture. This leaves students with the impression that tribal cultures vanished after nineteenth century wars or survive only peripherally in the modern world. Consequently, many Indians and non-Indians alike have internalized distorted views of tribal life. Dialogue participants noted that there should be little wonder why so many Indians develop negative self-images.

Participants presented ways in which Indian people can take the distortions, propaganda, and falsehoods out of the classroom. By reeducating non-Indian teachers and writing their own histories, Indians can provide a more truthful interpretation of human interaction. Educational materials need to stress Indians' social, economic, and political contributions to the world. This, along with the integration of Indian perspectives, knowledge, and philosophies, would remove some sources of bias in classroom learning.

There are no instant shortcuts for improving schools...Indian problems mirror broader problems in social life and both must be addressed simultaneously.

Robert Bennett, Oneida, 1988
Former Commissioner of Indian Affairs

American Indian Languages—Indians want to ensure the survival of their respective tribal languages. Dialogue participants emphasized that language retention is a key to cultural survival. However, many pointed with alarm to the decline of native languages in numerous Indian communities. They wanted schools to help reverse this trend by offering courses at all levels in local tribal languages and in bilingual/bicultural education. Indian students should have the option of studying their native languages to fulfill academic requirements.

Fine Arts—Fine arts, including the visual and performing arts, are an integral part of Indian life. Indian culture allows individuals to express themselves artistically in a number of ways. Yet schools have suppressed Indian creativity in favor of mainstream preferences. Dialogue participants asserted that schools must allow Indian students the option of applying their creativity within the context of tribal traditions. This means that educators must develop expressive classes in art, music, dance, and drama that focus on historical and contemporary Indian culture.

In the future, your business dealings with whites are going to be hard. We older people need you to help us understand what they are up to. Grandchildren, be good. Learn all you can.

Sitting Bull, circa, 1880

Physical Education and Health—Physical and intellectual development go hand in hand in traditional Indian culture. Schools must integrate Indian recreational activities into curricula to help keep tribal youth fit. They must teach Indian students how to prepare traditional foods in wholesome and nutritional ways. Teaching health in accord with tribal values will help eliminate many medical problems facing Indian populations, such as diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure.

Computer Competency—In a technological society, it is critical that American Indian students understand the use of computers. Many employment opportunities in the future will require computer-based skills. Dialogue participants noted that competency with computers could improve instruction in native content—a blending of modern technology and ancient tradition. For example, a greater understanding and appreciation of American Indian symbolic images for communication could be stimulated by using electronic and computer theory in the development of computer languages and operating systems.

Many [American Indian] children tend to sit quietly during classroom discussions, giving the impression to the untrained teacher that they are not learning.

Albuquerque Dialogue Participant, 1988

Call to Action

Indian children must be prepared to function effectively in two worlds. They need bridges between traditional values, languages, and spirituality and modern science and technology. With this in mind, dialogue participants issued a call to action. They recognized that future generations must live successfully in both Indian and non-Indian worlds.

Indian wisdom is the accumulated knowledge and tradition of Indian people. Dialogue participants recognized that knowledge and tradition vary among Indian nations and people. However, they also recognized a common world view and collective experience that sustains Indians as a unique people in American society.

American Indian languages, songs, art, and other cultural attributes transcend present-day society. This land is where Indian ancestors are buried, where the faces of the unborn are awaited, and where Indian people are at home.

The call to action recognized that cultural strength will preserve the future of Indian wisdom and will provide Indians with strength to meet the challenges of the modern world. With these thoughts in mind, dialogue participants identified nine major categories of concern. These categories are not presented in isolation, but in interrelation, as they all have impact on education. These categories are: Indian communities, tribes, parents, schools, students, testing, legislation, colleges and universities, and research and publishing.

Indian Communities—Indian community action, dialogue participants agreed, must spearhead drives for educational change. Tribal members must elect tribal officials willing to adopt education codes that mandate the incorporation of tribal language and culture into the curricula of local schools. These codes must clearly define ceremonial–spiritual rights for legitimate or excusable student absence.

Community groups must develop strategies for gaining access to school boards, teachers, and elected officials. They need to develop a system of accountability to assess school performance in meeting local needs. In the process, board members, local administrators, teachers, student policies, and curricula must be periodically evaluated. Communities need to work closely with schools and develop a program of teacher (re)education. Tribal groups should establish culturally based programs for combating alcohol and substance abuse, health problems, teenage pregnancy, and other problems confronting their youth. Urban Indians can use Indian centers, churches, and organizations as collective strength for facilitating similar change.

Tribes—Tribal governments, dialogue participants noted, have the power to become active partners with Indian parents and school districts in educational reform and community initiatives. In doing so, tribes must pass resolutions setting education as a priority. They must develop education codes for all local schools mandating the integration of basic curriculum with tribal values, language, intellectual concepts, and spirituality.

Tribal councils must assist students by establishing scholarship and summer-work projects. They should also encourage college students to return home after graduation. Dialogue participants also stated that tribal leaders should serve as positive role models for students by leading drug- and alcohol-free lives. They also pointed out that tribal councils must link tribal drug and alcohol abuse programs with local schools as a means of combating social problems.

Parents—Dialogue participants held that parents must assume a pivotal role in education. Parents must instill pride and self-esteem within Indian children. They must pass on values and beliefs that give children an Indian orientation toward academic and professional life. Finally, parents are important language and cultural resources in Indian communities.

Local initiatives should empower parents to influence school decisions. They should sit on school boards, organize parent–teacher associations, review curriculum, provide cultural training for teachers, and review textbooks. These activities would help school instruction present accurate interpretations of Indian history and culture.

Parents should launch community education programs designed to strengthen local education initiatives. These include programs for family literacy in English, for tribal education codes, and for community–school coordination. Finally, parents should assume ultimate leadership in cultural retention through home-bound language and cultural programs.

Schools—Dialogue participants stressed the central role that schools play in the lives of Indian children and communities. However, most schools have been unreceptive to tribal concerns and needs.

Dialogue participants articulated ways in which schools can establish linkages with tribal communities. First, schools must promote Indian identity by implementing a holistic curriculum, including language, history, and culture courses. Second, schools need to attract top-quality teachers and administrators, especially Indians who could serve as role models. Third, schools should encourage Indians to become more active in decision-making processes. In this regard, Indian parents should seek positions on school boards, and students must have a say in school affairs. Fourth, school and classroom environments should stress historical and contemporary Indian themes. For example, teachers could display pictures of Indian leaders,

The battle for Indian children will be won in the classroom, not on the streets or on horses. The students of today are our warriors of tomorrow.

Eddie Box, Southern Ute, 1988

scientists, and spiritual leaders as a motivational strategy to encourage Indian students to succeed. Fifth, schools should investigate alternatives to standardized testing, or create local methods of testing as a means of assessing Indian students' full intelligence and potential.

Students—American Indian students, the bearers of Indian tradition, must play an active role in merging tribal culture with education. Dialogue participants agreed that rigorous intellectual training will foster individual and tribal development. Education provides the student with knowledge of self and the world. Moreover, education provides the student with analytical and problem-solving skills. Consequently, the student should exploit available educational opportunities for individual and tribal betterment. Standards of high academic expectations and achievement must replace former ones of mediocrity and remediation. All academic and psychological barriers between the student and success, including alcohol and substance dependency, must be identified and eliminated.

Search for the truth. Indian values teach the holistic approach to the use of technology for mankind's good.

Al Qöyawayma, Hopi, 1984

Education should include traditional spiritual, cultural, and linguistic orientation. Toward this end, the performance arts should be explored and applied. Open and honest communication among student, parent, and teacher will best safeguard against individual alienation. With regard to academic preparation, the Indian and non-Indian must be treated equally. However, Indian culture must be viewed and used as a strength in providing students with this preparation.

Fear of computers and technology must be overcome if students are to grow into productive adults. Computers should be used within the classroom to instill traditional Indian ideas and values while cultivating academic competencies and subject-matter knowledge.

Native language acquisition is crucial for functioning within a multicultural world. Indian students should be allowed to study their native tongues instead of foreign European languages. This language training should start in preschool and continue throughout the educational process.

Informed students will know that American history, literature, art, philosophy, and religion are not restricted to the Anglo-American heritage. America is a country of ethnic and cultural diversity, and American Indians have rich cultures that need to be more widely appreciated. Indian students should be encouraged to bring their culture into the classroom when germane to the issues discussed.

Testing—Dialogue participants acknowledged that success on standardized tests is an important measure for students, particularly those who are college bound. However, standardized tests can reflect serious cultural bias. As a consequence, results will not measure intelligence among Indian students. For American Indian people, standardized testing sometimes serves as an impediment to college. Often testing has been more a measure of aculturation than of the probability of college success. Thus, standardized

testing for American Indian students needs to be considered in an appropriate context, used as one indicator along with others in college admissions.

Testing agencies should ensure that standardized tests are used and interpreted appropriately. They should encourage counselors and teachers to put more effort into preparing students for standardized tests and to communicate the merits and limitations of tests to students.

Legislation—Before culturally based education can become a reality, federal and state legislators must set a harmonious tone for change by enacting supportive legislation. Historically, local school districts have rejected reform initiatives in Indian education. Dialogue participants stated that legislative action—mandating revisions in teacher training, in teacher certification programs, in curriculum, and in standardized test questions—would help break down this resistance.

These legal actions would change education in several ways. First, school compliance with laws requiring teacher training and certification programs in crosscultural education, with emphasis on Indian culture, would necessitate the hiring of culturally sensitive teachers.

Second, school implementation of bilingual and bicultural education would serve two fundamental purposes. It would help preserve tribal language and culture. It would also bridge the gap between Indian communities and school systems by bringing more tribal members into the educational process as cultural and language specialists.

Many Indians who have succeeded in mainstream society have retained their culture and values. Some of them work in the white world but return to the reservation for religious ceremonies. Others received an education and returned home to live and work among their own people.

Richard Johnny-John, Seneca
A Faith Keeper of the Long House, 1988

Third, schools would give native languages the same respect as European languages. Native speakers would have the opportunity to learn in their native language, when that language is the student's first, thereby learning English as a second language. Conversely, Indian students should have the opportunity to learn their native tongue as a second language, when English is their first. Bilingualism goes hand in hand with biculturalism.

Finally, culturally appropriate standardized tests would raise Indian test scores. Standardized tests should not reflect acculturation more than intellectual development or potential. But too often tests discourage rather than encourage Indian students. If standardized tests are not made culturally appropriate, schools should use other measurements of scholastic achievement for Native American students. Alternative measurement methods need to be devised and implemented.

Colleges and Universities—Dialogue participants insisted that institutions of higher learning must become key partners in Indian education reform initiatives. They noted that scholarly writings and course offerings profoundly impact American education. Information disseminated through universal sources, whether factual, biased, or distorted, ends up in textbooks, documentary films, and classroom instruction.

Universities must change their curricula to reflect a multicultural society. They must develop courses that address Indian issues from Indian perspectives. They must invigorate teacher training programs by including classes focusing on Indian education and cultural issues. In the process, academia should establish linkages with Indian tribes and communities in order to ensure accuracy.

Dialogue participants noted that comparatively few Indians (10 percent) who enter college ever earn degrees. This statistic can be improved by providing Indian college students with career and culturally based psychological counseling, relevant coursework (such as tribal political and economic development), and Indian mentorship. University diversification, especially the recruiting of Indian students, faculty, administrators, and staff, would make the campus experience more rewarding and personal for Indian students. Racially mixed faculties would set the stage for drastic revisions in the curriculum, ending the non-Indian domination of higher learning. As a retention strategy, counsellors must urge students to take advantage of scholarship and fellowship opportunities.

Research and Publishing—Just as the exploitation of American Indian land and resources is of value to corporate America, research and publishing on American Indian topics is valuable to non-Indian scholars. As a result of racism, greed, and distorted perceptions of native realities, Indian culture as an economic commodity has been exploited by the dominant society with considerable damage to Indian people. Tribal people need to safeguard the borders of their cultural domains against research and publishing incursions.

Community-based research in Indian communities needs to be conducted in conjunction with the endorsement by tribal authorities for the purpose of ensuring that the finished product has value to Indian people and is educationally beneficial. Tribally sanctioned research on obesity, substance abuse, and alcoholism must be conducted to identify the nature and scope of these problems and to develop culturally acceptable therapy.

Scholarly research on Indian history and culture must take into account Indian perspectives. Published and

THE DIALOGUE FORMAT

This report documents the findings and recommendations of American Indian professionals and tribal members who possess first-hand knowledge of educational, social, political, and economic issues facing their communities. Twenty invited participants and others who covered their own expenses, including Indian students, parents, tribal leaders, and educators, expressed their views during each of seven dialogues. This report will be used to develop education reform initiatives in school systems serving American Indian students and communities.

During 1987 and 1988, some 150 American Indians, representing over 87 Indian tribes and communities and Alaskan natives, convened in seven American cities and reservations:

Northwest Coast/Alaska; Portland, Oregon
Cosponsor: Northwest Laboratory
California/Great Basin; Palo Alto, California
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The National Dialogue Project has laid the groundwork for broad educational reform in elementary and secondary schools serving American Indians by fostering community involvement in educational reform efforts, encouraging local initiatives that respect tribal values and agendas, influencing legislation and national programs that impact the education of Indian youth, and encouraging positive partnerships between Indian communities and educational leaders.

Dialogue participants divided into four groups and used their expertise as well as personal experiences to respond to one of the following concerns:

1. Identifying proper academic preparation for the modern world (using *Academic Preparation for College*, College Entrance Examination Board, 1983, as a reference point);
2. Identifying modern applications of traditional Indian educational techniques and understanding the critical place of cultural issues;
3. Academic motivation of Indian Students in K-12 for future college success—overcoming fear, barriers to learning, and alienation;
4. How to mobilize community support and participation in the improvement of academic preparation and student performance.

Each group spent a full day and a half discussing its respective area of concern. The four groups assembled in two plenary sessions where a spokesperson for each group presented its findings. Staff of the American Indian Studies Center of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), drafted reports of the proceedings and disseminated copies to dialogue participants for comments.

All regional directors, the project coordinator, and other key project personnel met during December 1988 in Boulder, Colorado to discuss the dialogue findings and to shape the final report.

Copies of the report will be disseminated to state and federal legislators, education policy makers, college and university administrators, clergy, educators, tribal leaders, and others who influence grass roots American Indian education.

unpublished manuscripts germane to Indians, as well as tribal history projects, could provide writers with a wealth of untapped information about historical and cultural processes not found in primary and secondary source materials. This methodology will help scholars avoid perpetuating stereotypes of Indians based on mythology, misconceptions, and romanticism. American Indian scholars need to become involved in producing research rather than serving as subjects and consumers of research. Measures such as these will ultimately introduce more accurate depictions of Indian experiences and lifestyles into the classroom.

Recommendations

Dialogue participants affirmed a holistic approach to education. Elementary, secondary, and university programs for Indian students should be guided by the spirituality

that is immanent in tribal communities. Education cannot be treated as an institution separate from communities. It is part of us, just as the sun, moon, stars, rain, snow, and wind affect us as we walk on Mother Earth.

The recommendations address key elements for holistic integration. This will lead to cooperation from tribal leaders and elders, improve self-image and analytical skills among Indian children, and ensure that accurate cultural portrayals are integrated in the teaching of academic competencies and subject areas. Ultimately, the recommendations are offered in the interest of self-respect and partnership—self-respect for educators and Indians alike—so that a partnership of cultural equality can be fostered.

Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors —the dreams of our old men, given them in the solemn hours of the night by the great spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and it is written in the hearts of our people.

Seattle, Chief, Suquamish and Duwamish Tribes, 1853

Consensus among dialogue participants resulted in a call for concerted action in seven principal areas that require intensive treatment:

- Inaccuracies and biased historical textbook accounts of American Indians inhibit native educational progress and mandate action in generating a correct version of American Indian history.

- Progress of Indian students through the educational system has been thwarted by repressive factors that make it imperative for all programs and individuals dealing with American Indian education to accelerate their commitment in order to improve the self-image of American Indian students.

- In order to ensure understanding among educators regarding uniformity of approach to the education of American Indian students, it is essential that Indian communities develop and provide in-service training to teachers, administrators, and school personnel through community training of educators.

- The cultural and philosophical uniqueness of American Indian world views requires an emphasis on the development of cultural curricula based on American Indian holistic educational concepts.

- American Indian educational processes can benefit greatly by organizing parents to exert direct influence on educational policies, program development, and practices through positive parental involvement in schools.

- The dialogue participants strongly encouraged parents to initiate minidialogues in their communities involving other parents, students, local school representatives, and Indian community leaders. Such minidialogues would focus on local educational needs and issues concerning Indian children and would provide additional opportunities for parents and community members to become more actively involved in local policy and programs regarding the education of their children.

- Dialogue participants recommend that BIA and tribal scholarship support be considered sovereignty awards similar to academic excellence awards. Participants recommended that eligibility for such college-scholarship support be exempted from the criteria of financial need alone.

Dedication

This report is dedicated to all American Indian people who have preserved their identity and culture. Like their ancestors before them, Indians want their values, spiritualism, and way of life passed on in perpetuity.

The National Dialogue Project on American Indian Education is dedicated to the memory of Michael N. Taylor. Taylor, an Oglala Sioux, participated in Indian affairs for 35 years. Throughout his life, Michael inspired people and worked tirelessly toward achieving a dream. He envisioned a day when Indian people would gain control over educational systems serving their children. He viewed education as a process of empowerment by which Indians could improve their lives.

Taylor influenced the momentum, tone, and content of the National Dialogue Project during its conceptual stages. He died on January 5, 1988, shortly after the second regional dialogue convened. Though he is no longer with us, his vision continually guides the effort. As we take the torch from Michael's spirit, we will pass it on to others, always remembering our ancestors.

Acknowledgments

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Hayes Lewis, William Gollnick, Dean Azule, Helen Peterson, Anne Medicine, George Abrams, Carmaleta Monteith, and Annette Jaimes served as Regional Dialogue Directors. They deserve special recognition for their dedicated effort. Working under financial and time constraints, they assembled a knowledgeable and professional core of participants from their respective geographical regions.

The assistance of AISES secretarial staff, student organizations, and individuals aided the project effort. Of these, Beverly Singer, Navajo/Zia, the Educational Program Officer of the Association on American Indian Affairs, deserves special recognition for her loyalty. She inspired those struggling to improve Indian education. Stanford University hosted a traditional sweat-lodge that was led by Arvol Looking Horse, Cheyenne River Sioux, that was a profound moment in molding Indian spiritual tradition and formal education.

This report was developed by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) and written in conjunction with the staff at the American Indian Studies Center at UCLA, which included James Riding In, Pawnee; John Red Horse, Cherokee; and Jeremy Rockman, Winnebago. Lenore Stiffarm, Gros Ventre, served as principal investigator. Lenore Stiffarm, James Riding In, and Troy Johnson served as Dialogue recorders. Cecil Leighton, Rosebud Sioux, provided editorial assistance. Sue Ware, Modoc, provided outstanding administrative coordination throughout the project.

From beginning to end, the National Dialogue Project was guided by the collaboration of Norbert Hill, Jr., Executive Director of AISES and James Herbert, Executive Director for Academic Affairs, the College Board.

Copies of this report are available from the College Board, Box 886, New York, NY 10101-0886, or from the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), 1085 14th Street, Suite 1506, Boulder, CO 80302.
The price is: $7.95 each for 1—4 copies; $2.50 each for 5 or more copies.